



# Catholic **Faith, Life & Creed**

*A Complete Catechesis for Christian Living*

**Doctrinal Catechesis Session**  
Mary Birmingham

## **REVELATION, Part 2**



Jesus reading sacred Scripture in the Synagogue



## Begin with the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Opening prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### ✓ Note to the Catechist

There may be more material than you can use in a one-hour session. Select and arrange accordingly. Use questions and material that is best suited for your particular group. Part One addressed the overall composition of sacred Scripture and the four senses of sacred Scripture in biblical interpretation.



## Read the connecting statement

to draw the line between this week's liturgy and this chosen doctrinal theme.

This connecting statement is found in the *Breaking Open the Word* worksheet for this week.

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Version 2.0 reflects all recent revisions in the Roman Missal.

NIHIL OBSTAT  
Rev. Steven Olds  
Censor Liborum

IMPRIMATUR  
† Most Rev. John Noonan  
Bishop of Orlando

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Editors: Bill Huebsch, Diana  
Macalintal, & Nick Wagner

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Catechist begins this session with remarks that include these points:

- ▶ Each of us is called to be hearers and doers of the word. If we are going to be “doers” of the word, it is important that we understand how to approach the sacred Scriptures.
- ▶ We believe God reveals himself to us in the sacred Scriptures.
- ▶ We must learn as much as we can about the Bible, so we can discern what God is truly saying to us in and through it.
- ▶ We must consider all the very human devices that were known to human beings at the time Scriptures were written that would impact the meaning of the sacred words.
- ▶ Thus, it is important that we understand something about the culture of the day and what various phrases and words meant at the time.
- ▶ Contrary to what some might think, God did not whisper in the ear of the sacred writer and tell him what to write word for word. No. God used everyday means of communicating, concepts out of the understanding of the people at the time. Thus, the Church tells us that it is important that we understand how to interpret the Scriptures.
- ▶ We do not believe in a literal interpretation of Scripture, as do our fundamentalist brothers and sisters.
- ▶ However, we do believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. That is why it is so important that we trust the guidance of those in the Church who have studied Scripture to help us understand what the words of Scripture are saying to us today.
- ▶ Today, we will unpack various forms of biblical interpretation in order to help us better understand what we are hearing so we can be better “doers” of the word.



## Sharing Human Experience

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question.

- ▶ How would you respond if someone were to ask you the following question: “You say that you have a personal relationship with Christ, that he reveals himself to you. How does he do that?”
- ▶ First, how does Christ speak to you personally?
- ▶ Second, how does God reveal himself to us?

Drawing from their responses, the catechist begins the next exercise.

Catechist continues:

- ▶ Originally, the sacred Scriptures were passed on from mouth to mouth; it was an oral tradition.
- ▶ Some of the Scriptures were not put to pen until many years after the events occurred.
- ▶ Let us engage in a brief exercise that demonstrates how the oral tradition worked.

Catechist demonstrates how all the details in the oral transmission of events can sometimes get lost, that what gets passed down in the end are primary themes, what was learned, in other words the basic theology of the event.

Exercise: In these or similar words the catechist begins:

“I am going to whisper some information to the person next to me about one of the saints of our Church. That person in turn will whisper what he or she thought she heard to the next person and so on. The last person then says out loud what was passed on to him or her.”

Catechist whispers the following to the person next to him or her:

July 11 is the Feast of Saint Benedict.  
He is a great saint of the Church that we honor.  
Saint Benedict was an abbot.  
He was born in Italy and was educated in Rome.  
He decided to live a solitary life in a cave in the mountains.  
He lived there for three years.  
Later he organized a community that would dedicate their lives to God.  
They would live a monastic life.  
Men who live the monastic life are called monks.  
The monks who joined him devoted themselves to prayer and to work.  
He is the author of the very famous Rule of Saint Benedict that combined all the scholastic treasures of Rome with the wisdom of the Christian East.  
Pope Paul VI proclaimed him the patron saint of Europe because he so powerfully influenced the development of Christianity during the Middle Ages.

“Whisper now to the person next to you what you thought you heard.” Each person whispers what they thought they heard. Last person to hear, says what they heard out loud. After they have done that, catechist reads out loud what was originally said. Compare and contrast the final transmission with what was originally said. (By the way, this is not a test—it is simply an exercise to test the oral transmission of events.)

Catechist continues:

- ▶ The point to this exercise illustrates that the overall gist of the story of Saint Benedict was probably remembered, but not all the details and facts.
- ▶ The biblical authors were not concerned with giving factual data or history about the events of Scripture.
- ▶ The primary concern in the Old and New Testament was to tell the story about who God is and how God wants to be in relationship with the human race.
- ▶ In the New Testament, they were primarily concerned with sharing the Jesus

event with their communities and future generations. They were concerned with telling his story, so that others could come to believe in him.

- ▶ They were interested in speaking to specific communities—to tell their story in a way they would understand who Jesus was and the message and challenge of the gospel he came to preach.
- ▶ Thus, since the biblical authors were coming to us from specific cultures with specific language and cultural idioms, it is important that we turn to the scholars of the Church. They help us understand what was being said to the original community so that we might make connection with our community today and be inspired and challenged as he inspired and challenged the first listeners.
- ▶ We do that each week with you when you break open the word. We ask you first what touched you. We then unpack what scriptural scholarship has to teach us about the text.

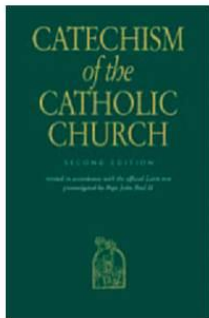
Consider the following example.

- ▶ In Luke's gospel Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor." Now each one of us could relate to that by saying I am not wealthy. I do not crave riches and wealth, so I also possess a poverty of spirit. Thus, this is a word for me as well. That would be the first valid way to hear that gospel, because it is what touched us personally. However, in Luke's gospel Jesus was very clear about his intentions. He was speaking to a community of peasants, Gentile peasants who were dirt poor. At the time of Jesus, it was generally understood that all the goods in existence had already been distributed, so there was not even an opportunity to have more goods and resources unless someone gave it out of the kindness of their hearts. Jesus' word was an incredible word of consolation to them in their hopeless poverty.
- ▶ When we break open the word, we relate to the gospel on a personal level. How did it touch *us*? After we engage on a personal level, we then consider the intended audience of the gospel. What was the author's agenda? Thus, in Luke's Gospel, we look beyond ourselves and recognize the absolute poor and realize that Jesus was showing his love, care, and compassion for the "have-nots" of this world.
- ▶ Thus, if we did not explore the deepest meaning of the text, especially as it was given to the original audience, we risk missing the entire point of the text altogether!

Catechist invites participants to engage in group discussion.

- ▶ Based on what you just heard, why would you say it is important to become familiar with what the Church teaches us about the Scriptural texts?
- ▶ (For participants in a catechumenal process only: When you look back on your journey through this process, what would you say breaking open the word each week has accomplished in your life?)
- ▶ What have you learned about the sacred Scriptures?

- ▶ Why is it important that, when you break open the Sunday Scriptures, we not only ask you what spoke to your heart, but we also give you the Church's interpretation? Why is that important?



## Sharing Catholic Doctrine

Drawn from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

### Catechist continues:

- ▶ Let us consider a few various ways to interpret sacred Scripture.
- ▶ Part One of our reflection on sacred Scripture talked about the various senses of Scripture, such as the literal sense. What is the historical reality of this text and the allegorical sense? What is the deeper meaning behind the text?
- ▶ Today, we are going to address several methods the Church uses to interpret the sacred texts.

### Scripture interpretation

- ▶ The Catholic Church did not begin serious modern biblical scholarship until 1943.
- ▶ The doors to biblical scholarship were opened on September 30, 1943, by Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu* (*Inspired by the Holy Spirit*).
- ▶ Various forms of interpreting the Bible were used to study Scripture. Two such forms are literary criticism and historical criticism.

### Literary Criticism

- ▶ When scholars use literary criticism, they study the language, cultural idioms, past and present meanings, and the literary devices that were used at the time the text was written.
- ▶ Literary criticism helps us get inside the story world of the text to allow the drama to touch, impact and transform us.
- ▶ For example, literary “attention-getters” were often used in the writing of a Scriptural text. Things that were out of the norm would catch the attention of the listener. For example, in the story of the prodigal son, when the son asked his father for his inheritance, right away everyone listening to that story would have been aghast! No one would ever, ever ask such a question. In that culture, it was the same as asking the father to die. For such insolence, the father could have had the son stoned. Thus, even though it is a story Jesus told, he told it with literary flair. The writer of the text did the same thing. He used a common literary device,



a device to get the attention of the listener, and in the process drew the listener into the drama.

## Historical Criticism

- ▶ When scholars use historical criticism, they study scripture within the context of the history, culture, customs, religious beliefs, of the original community for which the word was written.
- ▶ Historical criticism allows us to listen with the ears and cultural experience of a first century Palestinian in order to better enlighten the meaning for listeners of the 21st century.
- ▶ The ancient people would not hear or understand a text in the same way we would.
- ▶ As we read and study the texts we ask ourselves, “What did I hear and how did it touch me?” we must then move to the next step.
- ▶ We try to hear the text as the original hearers of the word heard it. Something might mean one thing to us and something altogether to a first century Palestinian.
- ▶ For example, in the story of the prodigal son, we might not think anything of the passage where the father “ran” to his son. That would not shock our sensibilities. However, in first century Palestine, no self-respecting elder would ever “run” to anything, let alone a rebellious son who should have been punished. The original hearer would have been shocked at the amazing “mercy” of the father, a rare mercy in that culture.
- ▶ Once we discover how the original hearers of the text might have heard it, we can have a conversation between how it spoke to us and how it may have spoken to the ancient people who heard it. In so doing there is potential for our original understanding of the text to be challenged and be amazingly transformed.
- ▶ The historical critical method allows us to move beyond a fundamental or purely historical meaning of the text.
- ▶ The historical critical method studies Scripture in the context of the history, culture, customs, religious beliefs, and economy of the original community for whom the word was written.
  - For example, earlier it was mentioned that the ancient culture believed that all the goods in the world had already been distributed and there were no options in bettering one’s economic situation. Once we know of that first century reality, the Scriptures where Jesus exhorts people to give what they have to the poor have all the more impact on us.
- ▶ This method recovers and discovers the past of the text in order to bring it into today. Since the Bible points to the mystery of God and of the divine-human relationship, it makes claims not simply on its original audience but on subsequent generations.
- ▶ We are not to approach Scripture as a historical, literally interpreted retelling of events and the people who were involved.
- ▶ Some people say that they believe in the literal word of God, that every event occurred just as it was written, and that every word meant exactly what was

stated. However, ask that same person, “Then you have sold everything you owned and you have given it to the poor just as Jesus commanded, correct?” Very often, such people will say, “Oh he did not mean that.” One cannot have it both ways.

- ▶ Who decides what to take literally? Catholics are blessed to have the guidance and leadership of the Church.
- ▶ Catholics and many mainline Protestant Churches understand the Bible to be concerned primarily with telling about the sacred event, yes, but most importantly uncovering the heart and soul of the message, the reason and meaning for the retold event, the theology and meaning behind the event.
- ▶ It is important for us to remember: in 1948 The Pontifical Biblical Commission, the scriptural teaching office for the Catholic Church (binding on all Catholics) stated that history in the Bible is not history in the sense that we understand history. It is not history in the modern sense.
- ▶ Salvation history is more concerned with who God is and how God is in relationship with his people throughout salvation history. Stories help punctuate that reality.
- ▶ The biblical authors were not concerned with offering factual, chronological details. They were more concerned with giving a theology of God and allowing us to have a conversation with him. The stories punctuated that theology.
- ▶ Important: That does not mean that the events did not happen. It means that the events were told always from the perspective of God’s action and the faith of the people.
- ▶ The stories of Scripture had often been told as an oral tradition for centuries. Specific details often get lost and sometimes elaborated when stories are passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. (Your first exercise showed that not all the details got passed on to the fullest extent.)
- ▶ The vehicle used to travel the road of biblical interpretation is far less important than the destination.
- ▶ What is important is the heart and soul of the text: “How have we been transformed as a result of our conversation with the Scriptures?”

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following questions in the wider group.

- ▶ Let us review:
- ▶ What does literary criticism explore?
- ▶ What does historical criticism take into account?
- ▶ Why are those two forms important tools for us in understanding the sacred Scriptures?



Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question in small groups. Catechist shares an event from his or her life and then invites all to respond. See appendix for an example.

- ▶ Have you ever had the experience in which a specific Scripture truly invited you to change course, or become aware of your need to change, or to invite you to be a better disciple?

After allowing a generous time for sharing, catechist invites participants to share the insights of their sharing with the wider group.

Catechist continues:

- ▶ Biblical interpretation allows the texts to interpret us, to tell us who we are: God's beloved and chosen people.
- ▶ Scriptural interpretation draws on the wisdom and lived experience not just of us today, but of past Christian communities through the centuries.
- ▶ Such communities struggled to live the gospel as it was passed on to them. Because of the struggle, the Church today is beneficiary of a rich deposit of faith emanating from the Scriptures. Biblical archaeology and study since 1943 has contributed greatly to our understanding of the sacred text.
- ▶ There are a lot of details about Scripture that we want to pass on to you. Thus we are giving you a few handouts today. We could spend weeks learning about the Bible. Our primary concern is to instill a love for the Scriptures and to encourage you to read it and study it. All the details are important, but you can read about those in the handouts we will give you.
- ▶ As we draw our session to a close, let us recap some important points about sacred Scripture.

## Let Us Review

Catechist uses the following true and false exercise to consolidate the learning. The answers are provided in the parentheses.

- ▶ What two forms of biblical criticism did we explore today? (Literary and historical criticism.)
- ▶ True or false: Catholics consider the Bible as exact chronological history. (false)
- ▶ True or false: Catholics do consider the Bible to be historical. (true)
- ▶ True or false: Catholics consider the Bible the inspired word of God—not the literal word of God. (true)
- ▶ True or false: Catholics regard everything in the Bible as absolutely factual. (false)
- ▶ True or false: Catholics do not literally interpret everything in the Bible. (true)
  - For example Jonah being swallowed in the belly of a large fish is a story to emphasize a theological point—not a story about someone being swallowed by a big fish!
  - There are two creation stories in the book of Genesis. If we believed in a literal understanding of Scripture—which story then is accurate? The point of the creation stories in Genesis is to use the medium of story to illustrate a theological point—God is the author of all life and all creation.
- ▶ True or false: Catholics do consider some things perhaps not literal but factually and historically accurate. (true)

- For example Christ's passion, death, and resurrection are historical and factual. There is too much evidence in antiquity and in secular sources not to believe it. Some of the details may differ between versions (remember it was first passed down as an oral tradition), but it is nonetheless factual and historical.
- ▶ True or false: Catholics do believe in Scripture as God revealing himself to us through biblical authors who were conditioned by their culture, language, and history. (true)

Note to catechist: For some people these might be difficult concepts to embrace, especially if they come from a background that states that if it is in the Bible it happened just as the Bible states it. Allow people the space to express their difficulty with this understanding of the Scriptures.

Catechist invites participants to share the following question in small group and to ponder their answers in their hearts throughout the week.

- ▶ What are your favorite stories of Scripture? Why are they your favorites? How do they speak to your life?
- ▶ What Scripture story particularly speaks to what is happening in your life right now?



## Community Connections

- ▶ Liturgy, Scripture, and doctrine challenge us to transform our lives so that we can go out and help transform the world.

Is there something happening this week in the parish that might help you respond to today's session—to help you not just be a hearer of the word, but a doer of the word as well? There is a team beginning this week that will be starting a new Habitat for Humanity project. Parishioners are meeting at the site this Saturday. Perhaps we can meet for breakfast and then join the others for this very worthwhile project.



## Mystagogy & your decision for change

Catechist invites participants to respond in faith to the following challenge by writing their response in their journal.

Participants commit to a specific action, change of behavior, or attitude as a result of participation in today's liturgy. Perhaps persons commit to a specific Spiritual and Corporal Work of Mercy in response to God's call.

- What one thing that you discussed today, either in regard to breaking open the word or this session on Scriptures, had an impact on you? What made you want to continue to reflect this week, that you believe in some way may have challenged you or invited you to change?



## Closing Prayer

Read Luke 4: 16-21

Heavenly Father,  
Jesus demonstrated to all believers the power of the word.  
We ask that you instill in us a deep love for the sacred Scriptures.  
May your Word be a lamp to light our way.  
May it illuminate our journey of life.  
May it be the means for us to nurture an ongoing intimate relationship with you.  
May your Word forever be etched on our hearts.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## Appendix

On the morning of 9/11, I was watching the Twin Towers fall just about the time I knew my daughter would be entering those buildings. It would be five hours before I knew she was safe. I was gripped with fear. I could not pray. I tried, but I was so afraid all I could do was stare in disbelief. In my five-hour sojourn I did, however, think of the disciples cowering in fear after Jesus' crucifixion. They trembled, not just in fear, but in terror. They wondered when the authorities would come to haul them away. They wondered when they too would experience a similar fate. As they huddled together in abject horror, Jesus came to them. He did not knock or come through an open door. He made no sound whatsoever. He simply passed through the door.

The Scripture that comforted me that day would be the story of Jesus quietly and simply passing through the door. It would be my rock for the future. The disciples were so afraid they could not, probably would not, have opened the door had he knocked. Jesus knew their fear and passed right through the closed door. His first words were, "Peace be with you." Today, when chaos knocks at my door, I recall that Scripture and know I am called to trust in even the most dire of circumstances, knowing that Christ will pass through my door and say, "Peace, I am with you."

## Supplemental Handout

More explicit detail about the gospels

### The Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called synoptic gospels.

- † The term *synoptic* comes from Greek and means “hearing with the same ears.”
- † Their overall vision of Jesus is fairly similar. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus is very busy establishing his reign and teaching his disciples what it means to live and work toward building that reign. Thus, there is little time or concern for proclaiming a theology about himself. John’s Gospel, on the other hand, provides us with a refined theology of Jesus Christ.
- † Each gospel was written from the vantage point of the community for which it was intended. There was a significant difference in the way a story was told depending on the economic and class status of the listener. The stories were told with the community in mind, according to their needs and life situation. Since each evangelist was writing for his own community and from his own perspective, each gospel bears the distinctive personality and specific agenda of its author.
- † It was once thought that Matthew was the earliest gospel. However, research has shown that Mark was the first evangelist since much of his text appears in both Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke also share similar material that is not included in Mark. Thus, most scholars would agree that there must have been another source that was familiar to both Matthew and Luke. This lost reference is called *Quelle* (*German for source*) or “Q.”
- † As the Hellenized, Greek-speaking world became Christianized, the original biblical texts were translated into Greek. Translation from one language to another automatically demanded interpretation. Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Greek. Every gospel was not only interpreted into a new language, but into a different cultural system and world-view as well. By the time the Greek texts were compiled, the culture had already embraced Greek philosophical thought that colored the translations according to a Greek thinking and philosophical understandings.
- † Very often, there are no appropriate words to translate the complexity of meaning in the original language; thus, approximations are made. Language is limited. Scholarship, study, and archaeological efforts have helped unearth authentic interpretation of the ancient texts.
- † Biblical interpretation (sometimes is called *exegesis*, which means to draw out of a text) is not an exact science. Yet that need not shake our faith too greatly as the synoptic gospels are not always consonant with one another either. In many instances, they contradict each other. For example, Luke’s Jesus dies on the cross with a sense of peaceful confidence (23:46; cf. 23:34, 43), whereas Mark’s Jesus cries out with a sense of rejection (15:34ff).
- † Each evangelist has his own perspective and draws upon the corporate memory of their different communities. New Testament scholarship recognizes that “the Gospels themselves are not histories of Jesus but the record of how communities remembered Jesus and taught new generations what and how they remembered.”<sup>1</sup>
- † All scriptural interpretation is biased in one way or another. There is no such thing as an uninterpreted fact. History, for example, is shaded according to the bias of the historian. Facts, no matter how certain they are, are interpreted through the lens of the messenger, scribe, or historian. Most scholars agree that none of the evangelists were eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life and

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<sup>1</sup>Lee, Bernard, J, p. 38

ministry. They had to rely on an oral account (a previous tradition) of his life. Scripture scholar, the late Raymond Brown asserts that the gospels developed over a long period of time and were based on the memory and tradition of communities who lived and celebrated Jesus' words and deeds.

- † Each evangelist gives us a multi-faceted view of Jesus. Brown suggests that we should not be disconcerted when we read the contrasting view of Jesus in the gospels. Nor should we attempt to decide which view is the most correct. Each view is given to us “by the inspiring Spirit, and no one of them exhausts the meaning of Jesus. It is as if one walks around a large diamond to look at it from three different angles. A true picture of the whole emerges only because the viewpoints are different.”<sup>2</sup>
- † What does all this mean for us? When reflecting upon the Scriptures, people often focus on a “warm fuzzy” personal, literal, fundamentalist hearing and understanding of Scripture. “This is what it must mean because this is what it says,” or “How did it make me *feel*?” There is nothing wrong with approaching the Scriptures with those questions. It is the first way we are to approach the Bible. It is beneficial insofar as it touches the person's lived experience. However, sometimes this initial reaction becomes the final perspective and people unwittingly are left with a fundamentalist understanding of the text. “This is what it means because this is what it says and since it is in the Bible it must be right.” They are not challenged to move beyond their basic assumptions regarding the meaning of texts and the implication for Christian living. Opportunity to be challenged by the heart and soul of the text is often missed. We are invited to move beyond this initial literal understanding to one that provides the foundation for a renewed way to live as a disciple in the kingdom of God.
- † For example, on the Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C, we hear Luke's version of the Beatitudes. “Blessed are you poor; the reign of God is yours” (6:20). An exclusively personal hearing of this Scripture might prompt someone who is not literally poor to identify with the poor of Luke. They might think, “Surely, this means all who are poor in any way such as the lonely, the stressed, those who are poor in spirit. I certainly am in that category.” While Matthew's gospel does indeed make this extension, Luke does not. The person's identification with the poor and their personal assigning of meaning to the text perhaps is due to a life situation such as stress, sorrow, or grief. This identification is not only logical, but also desirable. It helps the person encounter God's love and compassion. However, the biblical interpretation on the text presents a challenge. After conversing with the interpretation of the passage, that same person, given the opportunity, is invited to move beyond self, to a world view that embraces the heart of Luke's gospel: radical concern for the poor and the marginalized. “Luke's poor are the real “have-nots” of this world; his hungry know the misery of an empty stomach; his unfortunates are weeping. And just so that we do not miss the realism of the Beatitudes, Luke narrates a series of corresponding “woes” hurled against the rich and the content who do not know the meaning of need.”<sup>3</sup>
- † After such reflection on Luke's Beatitudes, the person's original understanding is challenged. A decision is in order. He or she must decide if they are willing to have their original assumption and understanding challenged. Transformation takes place through honest conversation with the interpretation. Concern for self moves to concern for others; in this

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Brown, Raymond, F. *The Beatitudes According to Luke*, *New Testament Essays* Garden City: Doubleday Image Books in 1965 p. 336.



case, the poor and marginalized. Conversion moves us beyond the personal (me only) to the corporate and the global (us together).

**The Catholic Bishops answer the following question:**

**1. What's the difference between a "Catholic Bible" and a "Protestant Bible"?**

Catholic and Protestant Bibles both include 27 books in the New Testament. Protestant Bibles have only 39 books in the Old Testament, however, while Catholic Bibles have 46. The seven additional books included in Catholic Bibles are Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch. Catholic Bibles also include additions to the Books of Esther and Daniel that are not found in Protestant Bibles. These books are called the deuterocanonical books. The Catholic Church considers these books to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Further elaboration

*What is the Difference between Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible?*

The Bibles used by Catholics and Protestants are not the same. Catholics and Protestants use the word "apocrypha" differently. There are OT books that are considered apocryphal by all Christian Churches, including Catholicism. There are other books, called "Deuterocanonical" by Rome that are considered part of the canon by Rome, and are considered apocryphal by other Christian Churches. These Deuterocanonical books are: Tobit, Judith, First and Second Maccabees, The Book of Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus (not to be confused with Ecclesiastes, which is accepted as canonical by all Christian Churches). Protestant Churches do not accept the deuterocanonical books as canonical, and you will not find them in their bibles.

Another difference is the texts from which the translations were made. The Catholic Bible is sourced primarily from the Latin Vulgate and Codex Vaticanus. The early Protestants used the Textus Receptus. This difference is not so pronounced today with many different versions available for Protestants being sourced from additional texts.

Bible translations developed for Catholic are complete Bibles. This means that they contain the entire canonical text identified by Pope Damasus and the Synod of Rome (382) and the local Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), contained in St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation (420), and decreed infallible by the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1570). This canonical text contains the same 27 NT Testament books that Protestant versions contain, but 46 Old Testament books, instead of 39. These seven books, and parts of two others, are called deuterocanonical by Catholics (2nd canon) and apocryphal (false writings) by Protestants who dropped them at the time of the Reformation. The deuterocanonical texts are Tobias (Tobit), Judith, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Wisdom, First and Second Maccabees and parts of Esther and Daniel. Some Protestant Bibles include the "Apocrypha" as pious reading.

## LECTIONARY

The lectionary is the book that contains the chosen scriptural texts from the Old and New Testaments for proclamation in the liturgy throughout the liturgical cycle. There are three cycles. In Year A, we hear the gospel according to Matthew's perspective. Year B, we hear from Mark, and in year C, we hear from Luke. John is interspersed throughout all three cycles. The lectionary is the medium in which Catholics encounter the Bible, the living word of God, in their worship. We proclaim the majority of the sacred Scriptures in a three-year cycle. All of salvation history is told, celebrated, and made present in one complete cycle.

Christ is sacramentally present to us in the proclamation of the biblical texts and continues to teach, form us and provide new, life-changing insight into the living word of God. The reason catechumens are sent forth to reflect on the word of God is that the Church understands the word of God in a sacramental way. Christ is present in the proclamation of his word at Mass. They go forth to feast on his word until the day they can feast at his table.